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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAKU 000994

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/30/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [AJ](#) [IR](#)

SUBJECT: INFORMATION ON IRAN OPPOSITION ARRESTS; HARSH
CRACKDOWN FEARED

¶1. (C) Baku-based Iranian contacts with known contacts with opposition figures provided Baku Iran watcher with a validated arrest list of some key opposition figures arrested late on December 27 and early on December 28. The list is not comprehensive but does provide a sense of the breadth of what appears to be a major crackdown. Most of those listed below are not radicals, and played a significant role in the founding of and/or early years of the Islamic Republic. Most were arrested in Tehran.

Partial List of Arrested

¶2. (SBU) Begin list of recently arrested:

Emaddin Bagi - reform ideologist

Ibrahim Yazdi - famous political figure

Leyla Tavasuleh - niece of Ibrahim Yazdi

Firuz Zandeh/Zandah - Minister of Agriculture under Khatami

Ali Reza Beheshti - son of Ayatollah Beheshti, ran Moussavi's web site

Mohammed Mohsin - son of Mustafa Mohsin (Minister of Education under Khatami)

Mehdi Arabshahi - Prominent cleric active at universities

Mustafa Izzadeh - prominent journalist

Mohammed Taheri - son of Ayatollah Taheri, married to Ayatollah Khomeini's granddaughter. Arrested in Isfahan.
Note: Baku sources claim Ayatollah Taheri's home is currently "blockaded" by regime security. End Note.

Ardavan Terakama and Majid Montazeri (leaders of "Anjoman Sulh," Organization for Peace

Hala Sahabi - daughter of Izzatollah Sahabi (Mehdi Bazargan associate), member of central committee of "Nehzat Azadi Iran"

Murtada Hadji - Minister of Transportation under Khatami, and close personal advisor. Currently Managing Director of Khatami's business venture "Baran." Operations of this company have also reportedly been disrupted.

Mohammed Bagarian - Moussavi advisor.

End List of recent arrestees.

13. (C) On related issues, a Baku Iranian contact told Iran watcher that he had known Sayeed Ali Mousavi, the recently murdered nephew of Mir Hussein Mousavi for many years, and described him as "easy going" and "totally apolitical." According to this source, there is no obvious reason for an organized killing of, except to put pressure on Mousavi and others. He speculated that the killing was a decision taken by hard-line Revolutionary Guard figures acting on their own initiative. He claimed that some "hard-liners" in the Revolutionary Guard and Basij are increasingly acting independent of any higher direction regime leadership.

Ashura Demonstrations

14. (SBU) Tabriz residents reported large and violent Ashura demonstrations there and in the Orumiyeh area, with up to ten allegedly killed in Tabriz (four according to official sources), and a large number of injured. Baku Iran watcher received reports of similar violent demonstrations with some killed in Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz, Qazvin, and Qom. Demonstrations in Mashad and Yazd were reportedly less violent.

Imminent Harsh Crackdown Feared

15. (C) A Baku source with a large network of opposition ties claims that there are fears among senior figures that a very

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tough crackdown may be imminent, and that this will be signaled by the arrest of former president Khatami and perhaps other top green movement leaders. Some of the opposition who believe in the concept of an Islamic Republic reportedly believe that Supreme Leader Khomeini is "looking for a way out," but is being blocked by Revolutionary Guard hard-liners. Several sources cited evidence of possible fragmentation among pro-regime elements, some upset by the regime's Ashura violence, while others call for a conclusive "smashing" of the resistance. One Baku Iranian source observed that "events are moving so fast in Iran, that even the (regime) leadership is confused, and isn't sure what to do."

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